

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A postage evidencing meter operable to be used by a plurality of users, comprising:

an authorization database having a plurality of entries, wherein each entry is associated with a user of the plurality of users, and each entry includes at least one parameter for storing parameters for a plurality of users, wherein the parameter limits an ability of the associated user parameters separately limit each user of said plurality of users' ability to evidence postage using the meter; meter, wherein limits on each user's ability to evidence postage provided by said parameters are in addition to a total amount of postage available from said postage evidencing meter; and

a processor operable to access said authorization database and limit the ability of a user of the plurality of users each user of said plurality of users' ability to evidence postage using the meter in accordance with the associated parameter, corresponding ones of the parameters of said authorization database.

2. (Currently Amended) The postage evidencing meter of claim 1 wherein the parameters include parameter comprises:

a maximum postage amount that a selected user of said plurality of users is allowed to use on the meter to evidence postage.

3. (Currently Amended) The postage evidencing meter of claim 1 wherein the parameters include parameter comprises:

a period of time during which a selected user of said plurality of users is allowed to use the meter to evidence postage.

4. (Currently Amended) The postage evidencing meter of claim 1 wherein the parameters include: parameter comprises:

a maximum postage amount that a selected user of said plurality of users is allowed to use on the meter to evidence postage over a selected period of time.

5. (Original) The postage evidencing meter of claim 1 further comprising:
a user interface;
a printer; and
a security module.

6. (Original) The postage evidencing meter of claim 1 wherein the authorization database is stored on a removable storage device.

7. (Original) The postage evidencing meter of claim 1 wherein the authorization database is coupled to the meter via a communication link to a remote postage information system.

8. (Currently Amended) A system for controlling postage usage, said system comprising:

at least one postage evidencing meter having comprising a processor, and a communication module for providing a communication link between the postage evidencing meter and a postage information system, system;

wherein the postage information system includes a database for separately storing at least one postage usage parameters parameter for each user of a plurality of users of the meter, wherein the parameters separately limit each parameter limits an ability of the associated user of said plurality of users' ability to evidence postage using the meter, meter; and

wherein the said at least one postage evidencing meter having a processor is operable to access said database through said communication module and separately to limit each the ability of a user of said plurality of users' ability users to evidence postage in accordance with corresponding ones of said parameters the associated parameter.

9. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 8 wherein the parameters include parameter comprises:

a maximum postage amount that a selected user of said plurality of users is allowed to use on the meter to evidence postage.

10. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 8 wherein the parameters include parameter comprises:

a period of time during which a ~~selected~~ user of said plurality of users is allowed to use the meter to evidence postage.

11. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 8 wherein the parameters include: a maximum postage amount that ~~the a selected user of said plurality of users~~ is allowed to use on the meter to evidence postage during a selected period of time.

12. (Original) The system of claim 8 wherein the communication link is a wireless link.

13. (Original) The system of claim 8 wherein the communications link is a wireline link.

14. (Canceled)

15. (Currently Amended) A system for controlling postage usage, comprising:
at least two postage evidencing meters, each meter having a processor and a
communication module for providing a communication link between the at least two meters, at
least one postage evidencing meter of said at least two postage evidencing meters separately
storing at least one postage usage parameter parameters for each user of a plurality of users,
users;

wherein said postage usage parameters define different postage evidencing limits with
respect to users each user of said plurality of users, users;

wherein at least one postage usage parameters parameter for at least one selected user of
said plurality of users are is exchanged between said meters via the communication link, link;
and

wherein the processor of the meter receiving said postage usage parameters parameter
controls the selected user's ability to evidence postage using the receiving meter in accordance
with the received postage usage parameter, parameters.

16. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 15 wherein the parameters include
parameter comprises:

a maximum postage amount that the selected user is allowed to use on the meter to
evidence postage.

17. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 15 wherein the parameters include
parameter comprises:

a maximum amount of postage that can be evidenced by the selected user during a
selected period of time.

18. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 15 wherein the **parameters include parameter comprises at least one of:**

a maximum postage amount that the selected user is allowed to use on the meter to evidence postage; and

a period of time during which the selected user is allowed to use the meter to evidence postage.

19. (Original) The system of claim 15 wherein the communication link is a wireless link.

20. (Original) The system of claim 15 wherein the communications link is a wireline link.

21. (Original) The system of claim 15 wherein said communication link is used to transfer postage values securely between the at least two meters using cryptographic techniques.

22. (Original) The system of claim 15 wherein the exchange of postage usage parameters is bi-directional.

23. (Withdrawn) A method for transferring postage value between postage evidencing devices, comprising:

receiving a request for a postage value transfer, the request identifying a destination device and an amount of postage value to be transferred;

creating a postage value token at a first postage evidencing device;

subtracting the postage value amount from registers in the first postage evidencing device;

transferring the postage value token to a second postage evidencing device;

verifying the postage value token at the second postage evidencing device; and

adding the postage value to registers at the second postage evidencing device.

24. (Withdrawn) The method for transferring postage value of claim 23 further comprising:

transferring the postage value using a communications link between the first and second postage evidencing devices.

25. (Withdrawn) The method for transferring postage value of claim 24 wherein the communication link is a wireless link.

26. (Withdrawn) The method for transferring postage value of claim 24 wherein the communication link is a wireline link.

27. (Withdrawn) The method for transferring postage value of claim 23 further comprising:

transferring the postage value using a removable storage device.

28. (Withdrawn) The method for transferring postage value of claim 23 wherein the postage value token is a cryptographically secure token.

29. (Currently Amended) A method for controlling postage usage comprising:
separately storing at least one postage usage parameters parameter for each user of a
plurality of users in a postage usage database, wherein said postage usage parameters establish
separate postage evidencing limits for each user users of said plurality of users, said postage
evidencing limits being independent of an available postage balance of a postage meter used for
evidencing postage;

receiving a request to evidence postage from a selected user of said plurality of users;

- (a) determining, based on the selected user's postage usage parameter, parameters, if sufficient postage is available within a current period of time to fulfill the request for the selected user;
- (b) determining if sufficient postage is available from the available postage balance of said postage meter used for evidencing postage to fulfill the request for the selected user;

evidencing a requested postage amount if said (a) determining determines that sufficient postage is available within the current period of time is affirmative and if said (b) determining is affirmative; determines that sufficient postage is available within the available postage balance;

recording postage usage for the selected user in the postage usage database; and

deducting an amount of postage used to fulfill the request for the selected user from the available postage balance.

30. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 29 further comprising:
authenticating the selected user.

31. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 29 further comprising:
receiving a request to configure parameters for the selected user; and
modifying postage usage limits in the postage usage database.

32. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 31 wherein the usage limits are selected from the group consisting of: limit is at least one of:

a maximum amount of postage that can be evidenced for the selected user;
a time period during which the selected user is authorized to evidence postage; and
a class of postage that the selected user is authorized to evidence.

33. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 29 further comprising:
receiving a request to purchase postage for the selected user; and
adding a purchased postage value to the postage usage database for the selected user.

34. (New) The postage evidencing meter of claim 1, wherein the at least one parameter comprises:

at least one of time and amount.

35. (New) The postage evidencing meter of claim 1, wherein the at least one parameter comprises:

at least two parameters.

36. (New) The system of claim 8, wherein the at least one parameter comprises:
at least one of time and amount.

37. (New) The system of claim 8, wherein the at least one parameter comprises:
at least two parameters.

38. (New) The system of claim 15, wherein the at least one parameter comprises:
at least two parameters.